

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 01914 260747Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 AF-10 EA-10 NEA-11 ISO-00
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FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1163
INFO AMCONSULHONG KONG
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1914

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROP CH CU

SUBJ: CHINA ATTACKS CUBA'S ROLE IN NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

1. CHINESE VICE PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN TOOK THE OCCASION
OF LIBERIAN PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S VISIT TO PEKING LAST
WEEK TO BLAST CUBA'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENT. SPEAKING AT THE JUNE 20 WELCOMING BANQUET,
HE PRECIPITATED A WALKOUT BY CUBAN, SOVIET AND EASTERN
EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS BY SPEAKING OF "THE COUNTRY THAT
PLAYS THE ROLE OF A MERCENARY IN AFRICA AND A TROJAN
HORSE WITHIN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT." HE WENT ON TO
SAY "IT IS ACCUSED OF BETRAYING THE PRINCIPLE OF
NON-ALIGNMENT AND OPENLY SERVING HEGEMONISM," ACCUSA-
TIONS WHICH LI FOUND "JUSTIFIABLE," HE CONSIDERED IT
"EXTRAORDINARY THAT SUCH A COUNTRY SHOULD STYLE ITSELF
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A NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY."

2. PRC MEDIA HIGHLIGHTED LI'S ATTACK BY CARRYING
HIS REMARKS ON CUBA AS A SEPARATE ARTICLE WHICH WAS
FRONTPAGED IN THE JUNE 21 PEOPLE'S DAILY. PEKING HAS
OCCASIONALLY USED THIS TECHNIQUE IN THE PAST WHEN IT
WISHED TO DRAW ATTENTION TO A NEW OR IMPORTANT POLICY

PRONOUNCEMENT CONTAINED IN A BANQUET SPEECH.

3. PEKING'S QUESTIONING OF CUBA'S NON-ALIGNED STATUS IS NOT NEW. CHINESE LEADERS HAVE TOUCHED ON THE ISSUE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS IN PRIVATE TALKS, AND A MAY 26 NCNA COMMENTARY ENTITLED "IS CUBA A NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY" ANSWERED THE QUESTION EMPHATICALLY IN THE NEGATIVE. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME, HOWEVER, THAT A TOP PRC LEADER HAS GONE ON RECORD ON THE ISSUE.

4. PRC MEDIA HAVE ALSO PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED ATTACKS BY FOREIGN LEADERS ON CUBA'S NON-ALIGNED STATUS, NOTABLY FROM ZAIRE'S PRESIDENT MOBUTU AND SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE. IN FACT, IT LOOKS FROM HERE AS IF PRC FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG HUA MAY HAVE USED HIS VISIT TO ZAIRE EARLIER THIS MONTH TO ENCOURAGE MOBUTU TO RAISE THIS ISSUE. CHINA HAS ALSO RECEIVED SOME TENTATIVE SUPPORT ON THIS QUESTION FROM FORMER YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTER MINIC, WHO, IN A SPEECH CITED IN THE JUNE 23 PEOPLE'S DAILY, ATTACKS SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO MANIPULATE THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. WHILE MINIC MENTIONED NEITHER THE SOVIET UNION NOR CUBA, HIS REFERENCES TO "HEGEMONISM" WERE UNMIS-TAKEABLE.

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5. ALL THESE SIGNS INDICATE THAT CHINA MAY HAVE DECIDED TO MOUNT A MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO WEAKEN CUBA'S POSITION IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. IN DOING SO, PRC LEADERS WILL HAVE TAKEN A CALCULATED RISK THAT THEY THEMSELVES CAN FEND OFF THE CHARGES OF "OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE" IN THE NAM WHICH THEY SO AVIDLY BRING AGAINST THE SOVIETS.
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